

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – THURSDAY, 8
FEBRUARY 2024**



Title of Report	GRANT REVIEW	
Presented by	Paul Sanders Head of Community Services	
Background Papers	Links are shown in the main body of the report.	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	Total general community grant budget in 2022/23 was £20,840, in 2023/24 it was £21,000.	
	Total Coalville Special Expenses Community Chest Grant budget in 2022/23 was £2,000.	
	Total Grant Agreement budgets (Citizen Advice and Age UK) in 2022/23 and 2023/24 was £93,990.	
	Free Tree Scheme total grant budget in 2022/23 was £19,430, in 2023/24 was £19,430.	
	Total UKSPF Community Grant in 2023/24 was £150,000.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	Legal Services advises on the legal implications of grant agreements with appropriate documentation being put in place.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	One part time member of staff is allocated to review the applications, gather further evidence (if required) and monitor the projects.	
	Citizen Advice rent a space at Stenson House. £10,000 paid in 2022/23 and £10,400 paid in 2023/24 to the Council under a lease arrangement.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Reason Agenda Item Submitted to Scrutiny Committee	To update members on the grants administered by Community Focus Team. This report covers the period April 2022 to January 2024.	
Recommendations	COMMUNITY SCRUTINY ARE REQUESTED TO PROVIDE COMMENTS ON THE GRANTS AWARDED SUPPORTING COMMUNITY PROJECTS DURING THE PERIOD 2022-2024, THE OUTCOMES AND THE CHANGES TO THE REGULAR GRANTS.	

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Community Focus provides a summary update on the grants scheme to Community Scrutiny on a biannual basis. The Community Focus team administers various grants with the regular grants categories being:

- Small Grant Scheme;
- Zero Carbon;
- Coalville Special Expenses Community Chest grant (only in 2022/23) and;
- Green Shoots.

1.2 In the 2022/23 and 2023/24 grants budget, the underspend from the grants budget was allocated to set up to support the Kings Coronation celebrations. This project was delivered and funded between January 2023 and April 2023.

1.3 In addition to the above, in 2023/24 the UK Shared Prosperity Funding Community Grant was open for applications.

1.4 In this report are details of the various grants the Community Focus team manages, what the grants are for, the procedure for applying for the grants as well as the grants that have been supported in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

1.5 The budget consultation for 2024/25 contained proposals in respect of grant funding which will be considered by Council on 22 February 2024. This report is not intended to address these issues which have already been considered by Corporate Scrutiny and Cabinet.

2.0 NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL GRANTS

2.1 Small Grant Scheme

2.2 The Small Grant Scheme makes a difference in helping communities get schemes and projects started. The organisations applying for the grants need to be a not-for-profit, voluntary organisation, community group or a registered charity. Consideration is given to applicants that can demonstrate the benefits of a new and innovative project for the local community and residents of North West Leicestershire.

2.3 Grants are available for one off project expenditure, equipment and other items or simply just to try something different. The small grant scheme aims to make grants easily available to qualifying local community and voluntary groups. The application process is open all year to organisations.

2.4 The grant scheme allows organisations to apply for up to £500. The application must be 100% match funded for example an application of £250 must be match funded by £250 from the organisation. [This link](#) provides details of the applications and awards made in 2022/23 and 2023/24

3.0 Zero Carbon Scheme

3.1 The Zero Carbon Scheme supports environmentally focussed community projects across the district of North West Leicestershire. The grant is open to all constituted

organisations. Match funding of £50 to £500 is required; this needs to be cash as opposed to in-kind funding. Therefore, the project should have a minimum value of £100 or a maximum of £1,000.

3.2 The project needs to fit around the following themes:

- General environmental improvements climate change projects
- Equipment for collecting litter and dog fouling
- Composting
- Energy efficiency
- Transport issues
- Projects for cycling/walking
- Wildflower meadows
- Community orchards
- Hedge planting
- Recycling

3.3 [This link](#) provides details of the applications and awards made in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

4.0 Coalville Special Expenses Community Chest grant

4.1 The Coalville Special Expenses Community Chest was a grant programme to support and encourage a range of community activities, initiatives and events that meet the needs of residents within the wards that are close to Coalville who do not have a parish council, these are; Coalville, Bardon, Snibston, Thringstone and Greenhill. The Council will particularly look at supporting activities that build the strength of community groups and help organisations to support themselves.

4.2 The grant scheme allows organisations to apply for up to £250 with no match funding required. This grant is closed as a result of budget reductions made for 2023/24 and is not running in 2023/24 or beyond.

4.3 [The link](#) provides details of the applications and awards in 2022/23.

5.0 Green Shoots Scheme

5.1 The Green Shoots Scheme was set up in 2015 as part of the Green Footprints Challenge. It supported the Council's green agenda through increasing biodiversity but also helps communities brighten up community areas in the Spring. Following suggestions, officers have increased the grant criteria to include long season collections. The main bulb selections are as follows:

- Spring collection
- Long season collection
- Daffodils
- Tulips
- Crocus
- Narcissi
- Snowdrops

5.2 The Green Shoots grant must be match funded and since the minimum order for each variety of bulb is 1,000, the applicant must order a minimum of 2,000 bulbs to qualify for the grant.

5.3 [This link](#) provides details of the applications and awards made in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

6.0 Platinum Jubilee Grant

6.1 In 2022, the May bank holiday weekend was moved to Thursday 2 June and an additional Bank Holiday on Friday 3 June provided a four-day weekend to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee - the first time any British monarch has reached this historic milestone.

6.2 In supporting this occasion, the Council offered up to £250 for parish councils, community groups and schools to apply for a Platinum Jubilee Grant to celebrate the Jubilee. The type of events held over the weekend included street parties, fetes and afternoon teas.

6.3 In total, £11,619 in grants have been awarded to 48 applicants which helped parish councils, schools and community groups throughout the district to commemorate the Queen becoming the first British monarch to celebrate 70 years on the throne. The grant also helps to support community cohesion and engender a sense of pride.

6.4 This was a one-off grant which ran between January 2022 and April 2022. [This link](#) provides details of applications awarded in 2022.

7.0 Kings Coronation Grants

7.1 The Kings Coronation grant was set up for groups and organisations in communities across the district who were looking to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III around or on Monday 8 May 2023.

7.2 This scheme was designed to include initiatives such as park community parties, community afternoon tea parties, street parties, markets, fun days, environmental activities, crafts as well as arts celebrating the monarchy and community picnics. The grant was open to parish and town councils, community groups and schools. There was a huge response to this grant scheme with 51 applications.

7.3 As part of the learning from the Victory in Europe Day 75 Grant, it was recognised that many communities that were not eligible as un-constituted were keen to apply for a grant, so twenty celebration packs (consisting of environmentally friendly cups, plates, cutlery and Union Flag bunting) were made available for those communities holding street parties.

7.4 [This link](#) provides details of the applications awarded made in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

8.0 Grant Agreements

8.1 Citizens Advice

8.2 The Council supported Citizens Advice (CA) in 2022/23 and 2023/24, to provide residents of North West Leicestershire with advice, information and representation.

8.3 The organisation provides advice on the following subjects:

- Debt advice and management – including assisting with applications for benefits, charitable funding, debt relief orders, breathing space, etc.

- Fuel poverty.
- Food poverty.
- Relationship breakdown/difficulties – including domestic abuse.
- Risk of homelessness.
- Landlord and Tenant issues – particular focus on private landlords.

8.4 Households or individuals who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are prioritised for advice appointments and are expected to be seen within ten working days.

8.5 It is a fundamental principle of the service that the advice is free, impartial, independent and confidential.

8.6 CA currently operates online, via telephone and, as part of the grant funding, it operates from Stenson House, providing face to face appointments. In the past few months due to demand and the resource of a local volunteer, Citizens Advice has been providing face to face appointments every Friday at NWLDC Customer Services at Belvoir Shopping Centre, seeing on average thirteen people weekly.

Financial Year	Financial Support	Homelessness Element
2022/23	£62,000	£10,000
2023/24	£62,000	£10,000

9.0 Age UK

9.1 The Council supported Age UK in 2022/23 and 2023/24, to deliver to the residents of North West Leicestershire a befriending service for older residents to reduce social isolation, promote independent living and enable access to services through information and support.

9.2

Financial Year	Financial Support
2022/23	£21,990
2023/24	£21,990

10.0 North West Leicestershire Free Tree Scheme

10.1 The scheme has been running for fifteen years and has been increasing in popularity and coverage over those years. The scheme offers two free trees per household and up to thirty metres of hedging per household. The scheme is delivered in partnership with the National Forest Company.

Free Tree Scheme	NWLDC Contribution	National Forest Contribution	Total numbers of tree and hedging in the National Forest area	Total number of trees and hedging given away through the district
2022/23	£10,430	£9,000	23,378	32,574
2023/24	£10,430	£9,000	22,531	32,800

10.2 The scheme supports the “Clean, Green and Zero Carbon” Council priority. The scheme is delivered by the Community Focus team. A breakdown of daily orders, species of trees and hedging can be found [here](#).

11.0 UK Shared Prosperity Fund Community Grant (UKSPF)

11.1 This new community grant was introduced in April 2023 following the Council's application being accepted by the Government in January 2023 on how £2.4 million was to be allocated and spent over three years. £300,000 was allocated towards a community grant fund.

11.2 The UKSPF Community Grant was managed by the Community Focus team in a similar way to the small/zero carbon grant but importantly embracing the criteria being required by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

11.3 Applications had to deliver one or more of the criteria below:

- Create or improve an area of public space, leading to increased visits.
- Make an area wheelchair accessible.
- Support a local event or initiative (e.g. arts, heritage, cultural, creative)
- Make an improvement to the local neighbourhood.
- Create a new or support an existing local facility (e.g. sports field, museum)
- Create or improve green space or water.
- Create or improve local paths and cycleways.
- Plant Trees.
- Make changes to an area to reduce the occurrence of Anti-Social Behaviour or Crime.
- Campaign to encourage visits to the local area.
- Provide volunteering opportunities, bringing diverse groups of the community together.
- Support an existing group to obtain, retain or develop skills, knowledge, and tools (particularly where this safeguards their future or helps them grow).
- Install or improve digital connectivity (e.g. broadband or Wi-Fi) in a community facility.

11.4 The first round of the scheme was closed in June 2023, applications were assessed and confirmed if approved or declined (and the reasons) in July/August 2023. The second round closed at the end of December 2023 and those applications are currently being assessed (January 2024).

UK SPF Community Grant	Total Applications in round one	Approved	Unsuccessful	Pending	Withdrawn	Total Funds Awarded	Total Value of the Projects
2023/24	51	19	28	0	4	£63,355.70	£102,631.34

11.5 A full breakdown of the applications and grants awarded from round one can be found [here](#).

12.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATIONS FOR 2022/23 and 2023/24

12.1

Small Grant	Total applications	Successful	Unsuccessful	Withdrawn/Pending	Total Council Spend	Total Value of Projects
2022/23	25	14	6	5*	£4,797.27	£36,871.43
2023/24	7	9**	0	0	£3,789.47	£34,621.91

*two applications received in 2022/23 but due to delays of information later approved in 2023/24

** the two applications submitted in 2022/23 but approved in 2023/24

12.2

Zero Carbon Grant	Total applications	Successful	Unsuccessful	Withdrawn/Pending	Total Council Spend	Total Value of Projects
2022/23	7	6	1	0	£2,996.55	£67,060.45
2023/24	9	6	0	3	£3,000.00	£22,393.48

12.3

Coalville Special Expenses	Total applications	Successful	Unsuccessful	Withdrawn/Pending	Total Council Spend	Total Value of Projects
2022/23	13	7	2	4	£1,719.19	£9,554.52

12.4

Green Shoots	Total applications	Successful	Unsuccessful	Withdrawn/Pending	Total Council Spend	Total bulbs
2022/23	22	21	1	0	£1,683	51,000
2023/24	20	19	1	0	£1,902	61,000

12.5

Platinum Jubilee Grant	Total applications	Approved	Unsuccessful	Pending /Withdrawn	Total Council Spend	Total Value of Projects
2022/23	52	48	1	3	£11,619.37*	£48,327.31

*£6,501.87 grants were provided in 2022/23 and £5,117.50 grants were provided in 2023/24.

12.6

Kings Coronation	Total applications	Successful	Unsuccessful	Withdrawn/Pending	Total Council Spend	Total Value of Projects
2022/23 & 2023/24	51	46	1	4	£10,679.94*	£72,433.12

*£4,223.02 grants were provided in 2022/23 and £6,456.92 grants were provided in 2023/24.

12.7 The total funding given out in 2022/23 was £20,201.71 but the total value of projects and money spend on projects for NWL residents was £126,214.83.

12.8 The total funding given out in 2023/24 was £20,265.89 but the total value of projects and money spend on projects for NWL residents was £155,492.87.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	- Clean, Green and Zero Carbon
Policy Considerations:	n/a
Safeguarding:	Applicants are required to submit copies of their safeguarding policies where the project directly involves children or young people or where deemed necessary.
Equalities/Diversity:	Grants applications are evaluated consistently against the grant criteria and subject to an approval process to ensure that every application is considered equally.
Customer Impact:	Successful grants awarded directly enhance the community of North West Leicestershire and its residents.
Economic and Social Impact:	Successful grants awarded directly provide an economic and social impact by providing employment opportunities to organisations and businesses within the district who are contracted to provide good and services. We would encourage organisations to buy local.
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	Grant schemes actively support and promote the Council's Zero Carbon Roadmap and Action Plan
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Ward members are notified on the outcome of the applications in their ward. The Community Services Portfolio Holder along with Head of Service approves the Small Grant, one off grants (i.e. Kings Coronation).
Risks:	Reputational risk is managed by ensuring positive community applications are supported. Support for applicants is provided to ensure applications are not refused where possible.
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